



# Pond and Stream; Wasteland

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BfK Rating:

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Heaven knows there are lots of ecology books about, and at first glance these look like just two more, but further inspection reveals something a little different. Milkins is an award-winning photographer and his highly illustrative pictures forge an excellent partnership with his straightforward conversational texts to provide books with more of an authorial stamp than have many such.

Here **Wasteland** is defined as 'land that is no longer used' - whose purpose has been abandoned rather than never was - so it's old railways, demolition sites, and all the odd corners that allow wilderness to persist in the most organised of places. Such sites show great variety and we find ways of investigating their diversity and surveying their flora and fauna. The author demonstrates virtues in the abandoned crisp packets but induces different conclusions from other litter. And all the time the reader is issued with little challenges like 'are there more minibests on your wasteland area than on mown grass?' after being shown how to find out. Small print notes tell us the expected answer but we're left in no doubt that the only real one is the one we get on the spot at the time. Thus does the author, heartwarmingly, show respect for his readers.

**Pond and Stream** is just as good - learn how to time a snail's breathing, see how bloodworms clean dirty water and, using a marvellous device made from a jam jar, a torch and a shoe box, get a water-boatman to turn over and swim on its front!

This is an excellent couple which gets out of the well-worn ecology rut and scores heavily from having an author as good with pen as with camera. So get these and look out for his **Wood** and **Seashore** which complete the series.

Running Order:

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**Links:**

- [1] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/pond-and-stream>
- [2] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/wasteland>
- [3] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/86>
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